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## Dear Friends,

Hello! If you haven't heard before about October being "Octopus Month," well, that's because Agnes, the postcard-sending giant Pacific octopus in my newest book, just invented it. (Octopuses are quite clever!)

That's right: Agnes heard about Shark Week, and decided octopuses deserve more than their allotted World Octopus Day (October 8), so we'll be celebrating all month long! You'll find octopus art and poems by fabulous artists and poets on my blog, and my [Twitter](#) feed will feature links to octopus information, including some really cool videos. I do hope you'll join the octopus fun! **If YOU have an octopus poem or art, I'd love to include it!** More information [here](#).

## 8 Things to Know about LOVE, AGNES:

1. Agnes  
may  
not  
be  
the  
smartest  
octopus  
in  
the  
sea,  
but  
she  
*is*  
funny.
2. It's  
no  
coincidence  
that  
there's  
an  
Andrew  
in  
this  
book,  
AND  
the  
author  
has  
a  
son

named  
Andrew.  
Both  
have  
big  
feelings  
about  
their  
siblings.

3. This  
book  
is  
a  
transformer,  
just  
like  
Agnes:  
it  
started  
as  
a  
poem...  
then  
morphed  
into  
a  
collection  
of  
poems...  
then  
became  
a  
postcard  
exchange.

4. Writing  
this  
book  
was,  
in  
part,  
a  
way  
for  
the  
author  
to  
work  
through  
grief  
as  
her  
father  
was  
in  
the

last  
stages  
of  
cancer.  
(Agnes  
taught  
her  
that  
death  
doesn't  
have  
to  
be  
a  
dark  
topic.)

5. Just  
like  
Agnes,  
the  
author  
loves  
sending  
—  
and  
receiving  
—  
postcards.

6. The  
author  
fell  
in  
love  
with  
octopuses  
when  
she  
read  
THE  
SOUL  
OF  
AN  
OCTOPUS  
by  
Sy  
Montgomery.  
She  
believes  
the  
octopus  
is  
her  
patronus.

7. Agnes

and  
the  
author  
are  
looking  
forward  
to  
meeting  
readers  
(and  
octopuses!)  
during  
The  
Great  
Southeastern  
Octopus  
tour  
of  
museums/aquariums  
during  
October/November.

8. The  
author  
is  
inspired  
by  
the  
way  
Agnes  
loves  
the  
world  
fiercely,  
with  
all  
three  
of  
her  
hearts.

**YES! I want to celebrate October Month with a copy of LOVE,  
AGNES!**

### **Advance Praise for LOVE, AGNES:**

by Irene Latham, Illustrations by [Thea Baker](#)

[Millbrook Press/Lerner](#)

October 1, 2018

978-1512439939

Toward the end of her short life, an octopus exchanges a series of postcards with others around her, including a boy on a pier and her newly hatched eggs. Spread by spread, a simple narrative accompanied by postcard messages provides clever introduction to the life of a giant Pacific octopus. **Though Latham's story is thoroughly fantastic, both author and illustrator have been respectful to this amazing creature, describing realistic behaviors and depicting her relatively accurately, right down to the rectangular pupils of her eyes and her senescent color change.** Agnes the octopus squeezes herself into a jar and later into a crevice in the rocks. As "Crabby Crab" requests, she stops eating crabs, but only because she's ready to lay her eggs. She evades a predator by ejecting a cloud of ink. She quietly tends her eggs until they hatch, and then she bids the world goodbye. She has final advice for her pen pal Andrew, too: "You can't be mad or sad when you're swimming. Try it." Backmatter offers further information about octopuses (including the correct plural) as well as solid suggestions for further reading. Baker's appealing collage, acrylic paint, and digital illustrations are full of deep-sea color and abound with interesting patterns and textures. They include other thoroughly recognizable sea dwellers. **Certainly the most engaging of the recent wave of octopus stories, for reading aloud or reading alone.** (Informational picture book. 4-7)

– *Kirkus Reviews*



*illus. by John Holyfield*

## Coming Soon!

See you at **NCTE!**

I'll be joining some amazing authors and educators to present:

### **1. Writing Poetry In the Wild: Using Place, Play, and Perspective to Empower Student Writers**

Scheduled for: Friday, November 16, 2018 3:30-4:45 p.m.

### **2. Voice, Vision, and Variety: Empowering Students with Innovative Nonfiction**

Scheduled for: Saturday, November 17, 2018 11:00 a.m.-12:15 p.m.

**4:00 signing LOVE, AGNES at the Lerner booth**

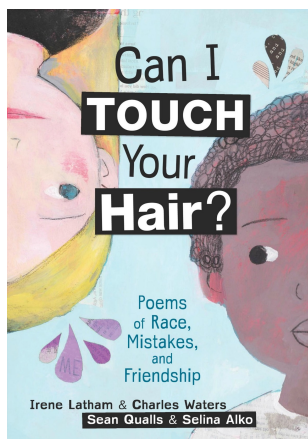
and

## MEET MISS FANCY

**(G.P. Putnam's Sons) coming January 8, 2019!** *Alabama friends: This is a great title to celebrate our state's Bicentennial! Also, please mark your calendars for a Miss Fancy-Fest to be held at Birmingham's Avondale Library, Sunday, January 13, 2019!*

A charming and significant story set prior to the Civil Rights Movement about a boy who finds a way to challenge segregation laws. *Inspired by the real-life Miss Fancy!*

Frank has always been obsessed with elephants. He loves their hosepipe trunks, tree stump feet, and swish-swish tails. So when Miss Fancy, the elephant, retires from the circus and moves two blocks from his house to Avondale Park in Birmingham, Alabama, he's over the moon! Frank really wants to pet her. But Avondale Park is just for white people, so Frank is not allowed to see Miss Fancy. Frank is heartbroken but he doesn't give up: instead he makes a plan!



*illus. by Sean Qualls & Selina Alko*

**Thanks to you, CAN I TOUCH YOUR HAIR? has gone to a 4th printing!**

[Charles Waters](#) and I are so grateful for the love shown to our book of poems about race, mistakes and friendship. The book, which features illustrations by [Sean Qualls and Selina Alko](#), was released this past January from [Carolrhoda/Lerner](#), and has since popped up on some fun lists, including:

[9 Best New Friendship Books for 2018](#)

[2018 Book all Young Georgians Should Read](#)

[2018 Girls of Summer Reading List](#)

100 Progressive Books for Children

NEA 2019 Read Across America poster

Anderson's Book Shop Mock Newbery

We're especially grateful to educators who've invited us to share our book in person with readers in [Alabama](#), [Michigan](#), [Mississippi](#), and [New York](#). View readers' responses in poetry and art [here](#).

What an honor to be a part of these important conversations about diversity and inclusivity!

Thanks so much for reading! Wishing you an Octopus Month filled with all the things you love best.

**Love,  
Irene**

P.S. Wow. You read this entire newsletter! Agnes is so delighted that her skin's turning a happy shade of coral orange -- and she wants to enter you in a drawing to win an autographed copy of LOVE, AGNES! ***To enter, simply reply to this email and tell us 1 thing you have in common with Agnes, or with octopuses in general.*** \*\*Thank you!

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